



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**
Office of the Secretary

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN G. PERRY • Chief Deputy Secretary

June 8, 2020

Dear Child Care Partners:

On May 22, 2020, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Division of Public Health (NCDPH) Communicable Disease Branch issued a memorandum to local health departments on "[COVID-19 Clusters in Occupational, Educational, and Community Settings](#)." This memorandum defines the term "cluster" to be "a minimum of five cases with illness onsets or initial positive results within a 14-day period AND plausible epidemiological linkage between cases." Reporting and investigating clusters is necessary in order to implement specific control measures, identify risk factors, and understand the contribution of clusters to the COVID-19 epidemic in North Carolina.

Since April 27th, NCDHHS has publicly reported ongoing outbreaks in congregate living settings (e.g., nursing homes, residential care facilities, and correctional facilities). Outbreaks in congregate living settings are defined as two or more laboratory-confirmed cases within a 28-day period. This ongoing outbreak information is reported in a [biweekly report](#), which includes the facility type, facility county, facility name, and number of cases and deaths among staff and residents.

As NCDHHS begins to collect information on clusters in community settings, we will expand our public reporting to include reporting of clusters in licensed child care and school settings. Reporting of clusters in child care settings will begin on June 22, 2020. For school settings, reporting will begin when schools are opened for summer school or traditional school. Child care operators and school principals are already required per [G.S. 130A-136](#) to report suspected cases of reportable communicable diseases (including COVID-19) to the local health director of the county or district in which the school or facility is located. Public reporting of clusters in child care and school settings is necessary to protect public health and implement appropriate control measures.

NCDHHS will report on COVID-19 clusters in child care and school settings twice weekly. The report will include the names of child care facilities or schools with a COVID-19 cluster (as defined above), as well as the facility type (school or child care), facility county, and the number of cases and deaths among staff and children. As with the reporting of outbreaks in congregate settings, reporting for clusters in school and child care settings will disaggregate cases and deaths of staff and children.

As this pandemic continues to evolve, we are continually assessing the appropriateness of data to balance transparency, public health, and individual privacy. We are grateful for all your efforts to ensure our young children are staying safe and healthy while attending child care.

Sincerely,

Susan Gale Perry
Chief Deputy Secretary
NC DHHS

Mark Benton
Assistant Secretary, NC Division of Public Health
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NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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